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LETTER DATED 24 MAY 1997 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF IRAQ TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

On instructions from my Government, I have the honour to inform you as follows:

1. On 8 May 1997 the Kuwaiti side seized Iraqi fishing boat No. 4278/Basrah, an Evinrude-type fibreglass craft fitted with motor number R 1501086. Four Iraqi fishermen were fishing in Iraqi territorial waters when their boat suffered a mechanical failure and drifted with the current towards the Kuwaiti shore. Two Kuwaiti gunboats thereupon intercepted them, firing in their direction. This forced them to abandon their boat and make for the Iraqi shore. The two Kuwaiti vessels then towed the Iraqi boat towards the Kuwaiti shore.

2. At 0900 hours on 8 May, near buoy 31 at coordinates 913211 (1:100,000 map of Faw), two lightly armed Kuwaiti patrol boats fired on an Iraqi P-61 patrol boat that was inside Iraqi territorial waters. They then withdrew to the Umm al-Tha'alibah approach.

I request your intervention with Kuwait with a view to inducing it to desist from the acts of provocation against Iraqi citizens that have become recurrent in recent times and are in violation of the Charter of the United Nations, the norms of international law and the rules governing the demilitarized zone. In accordance with the principle of State responsibility, I also affirm the legally established right of the Republic of Iraq to seek compensation for the damage caused to its citizens by such acts of aggression and to demand that Kuwait should return the boat in question forthwith.

I should be grateful if you would have this letter circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Nizar HAMDOON
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

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